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ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher learning in the United States have hastened to create ethnic studies programs, perhaps as a sort of "fire insurance" against student activism and protests. Certainly the move toward ethnic studies has roots in the student activism of the 1960s. Such studies are particularly prominent in large public institutions, which are susceptible to public pressure. The variety of educational reforms that are gathered under the umbrella of multiculturalism includes the integration of ethnic studies into the curriculum. It also should mean that all students, and not just those of color, should be exposed to the histories and culture of Americans of non-European descent. Ethnic studies is a field in a state of flux and transition with no uniformity among any of the 700 or more mostly ethnic-specific programs and departments across the nation. The current controversy over political correctness is having a backlash effect against some ethnic studies endeavors. Most challenges to the continuation and enhancement of ethnic studies programs arise from these debates. (Contains 64 references.) (SLD)

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